

# PLANNING & ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW:

## **AN ORDER TO STRENGTHEN MAINE'S ECONOMY AND COMMUNITIES BY DEVELOPING AN OFFICE OF NEW AMERICANS**

SEPTEMBER 6, 2023

GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF  
Policy Innovation  
and the Future



The Governor's Office of Policy Innovation & the Future (GOPIF) was created by Governor Mills in 2019 to foster collaboration and innovative solutions to help solve Maine's most important long-term challenges.

### **Focus Areas**

- Climate Policy and Planning
- Economic & Workforce Policy
- Maine Jobs & Recovery Plan
- Children's Cabinet & Early Childhood Data Systems
- Opioid Response
- Housing Policy & Coordination
- Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Coordination
- Aging Cabinet
- Ending Hunger by 2030 Plan Coordination

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On August 2, Governor Janet Mills signed an Executive Order (EO) directing GOPIF to develop a plan for establishing an Office of New Americans in State government.

*“For generations, immigrants have brought their skills, education, and ability to Maine to build a better life for themselves and their families, contribute to the vitality of our communities, and become the workforce that our employers in Maine desperately need. This is as true today as it was a century ago. My order will develop a plan for a new office to help us ensure that Maine is fully drawing on the talents and skills of those who want to live and work in and contribute to our great state. This is a critical step for Maine’s economic future as we address our workforce shortage and support our communities and businesses.” – **Governor Janet Mills***

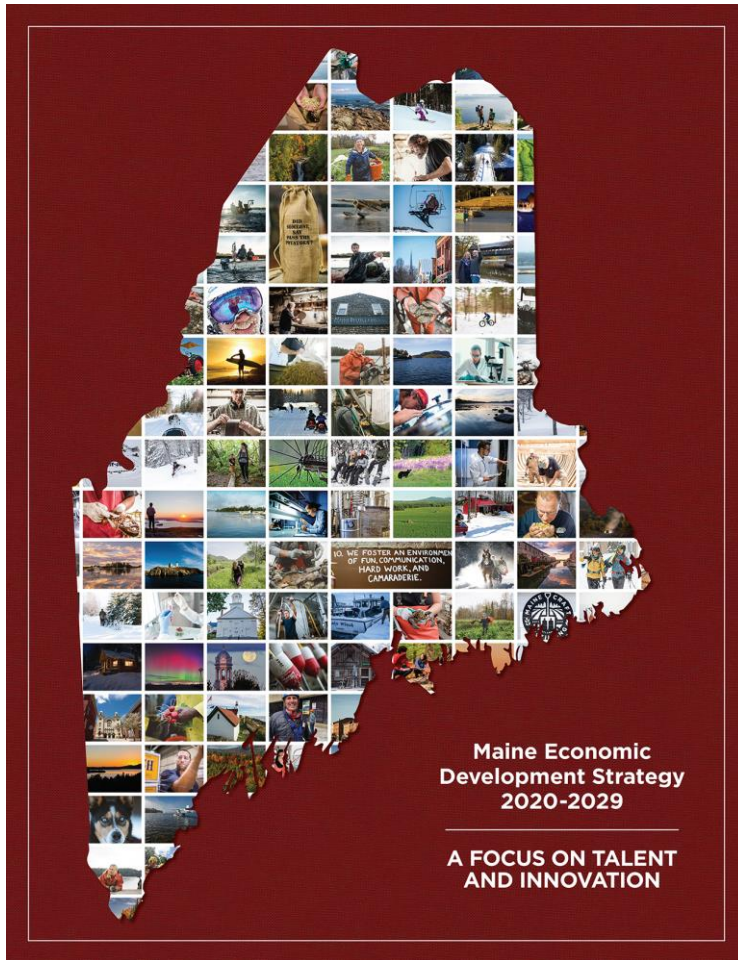


# EXECUTIVE ORDER OVERVIEW

- The EO describes the purpose of this office as **dedicated to supporting the long-term economic and civic integration of immigrants in Maine**, in support of goals of Maine's 10-year Economic Strategy;
- GOPIF is directed to engage key stakeholders, including immigrant communities, municipalities, schools and colleges, employers, community-based organizations, and other State agencies, for input on the office;
- The plan will outline the mission and structure of the office, the timing of its establishment, and the scope of its work;
- The State is also directed to participate in the Office of New Americans State Network, to access information and best practices;
- The plan is due to Governor Mills by **January 19, 2024.**



# MAINE'S 10-YEAR ECONOMIC STRATEGY



- Released in early 2020;
- Forecasted a 65,000-person contraction in Maine's workforce over the next ten years;
- Goal is adding 75,000 people to the workforce by the end of the decade,

*"Maine must be known by new Americans across the United States as the most effective State to find a meaningful job that matches their career aspirations with their prior skills."*

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# STATE GOVERNMENT PARTNER ENTITIES AND AGENCIES

GOPIF will coordinate plan development with the following state agencies and entities:

- Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD)
- Department of Labor (DOL)
- Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)
- Department of Education (DOE)
- Department of Professional and Financial Regulation (DPFR)
- Department of Administrative and Financial Services (DAFS)
- MaineHousing (MH)
- The Maine Community College System (MCCS)
- The University of Maine System (UMS)

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# ENGAGING WITH THE PLAN

**Website:** <https://www.maine.gov/future/ona>

- Please join our email list for updates on the plan
- Please use our contact form to reach staff, send input/feedback, or plan a community meeting.



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Immigrant Community and  
Community Based  
Organization Engagement



**Greg Payne**  
Plan Advisor

## Office of New Americans Plan

*The Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future (GOPIF) is developing a plan to create an Office of New Americans in Maine State Government, with the overarching goal of effectively incorporating immigrants into our workforce and communities to strengthen the economy.*

### About the Plan

On Aug. 3, 2023, Governor Janet Mills [signed an Executive Order \(PDF\)](#) directing her Administration to develop a plan to establish an Office of New Americans in Maine State government.

The Executive Order directs GOPIF to work with stakeholders – including other State agencies, municipalities, schools and colleges, employers, community-based organizations, and the immigrant, refugee, and asylum-seeking communities – to create a plan for the establishment of the new office to be delivered to the Governor by **January 19, 2024**.

With unemployment at record lows, and economic growth among the best in the nation, Maine faces a shortage of workers across regions, professions, and skill levels, especially in critical sectors such as health care, education, and construction. New Mainers are important to addressing this shortage of workers, and attracting new workers is a priority for Maine's economic future, with the State's 10-year Economic Strategy setting a target of attracting 75,000 new workers by 2029. Therefore,

The plan will outline the mission and structure of the office, the timing of its establishment, and the scope of its work, with the overarching goal of ensuring that Maine is effectively incorporating immigrants into its workforce and communities to strengthen the economy over the long-term.

### Office of New Americans State Network

The Governor's Executive Order also directs GOPIF to participate in the [Office of New Americans State Network](#), a consortium of U.S. states with dedicated offices or staff for coordinating immigrant integration. The Network is coordinated by a partnership of two organizations, World Education Services and the American Immigration Council.

Through the Network, the State will access expertise, experiences, and best practices from states across the country on developing policy approaches to support the successful economic, social, and civic integration of immigrants. In other states, Network offices are broadly charged with offering guidance and assistance to state agencies, with focus on economic areas such as workforce training, licensing, language access, and legal supports.

Maine will become the 19th state in the Network, following North Dakota and Utah in 2023; Wisconsin, North Carolina, and Illinois in 2022; and Colorado, Oregon, and Minnesota in 2021. Other Network states include Michigan, Ohio, Massachusetts, Maryland, New York, New Jersey, California, Washington, Nevada, and Virginia.

### RELATED LINKS

[Announcement about ONA Plan](#)

[Executive Order \(PDF\)](#)

[Office of New Americans State Network](#)

[Maine 10-Year Economic Strategy \(PDF\)](#)

[Maine Demographic Projections: Office of the State Economist](#)

[Mills Administration Actions on Housing and Homelessness \(PDF\)](#)

### GET INVOLVED

[ONA Plan Email List](#)

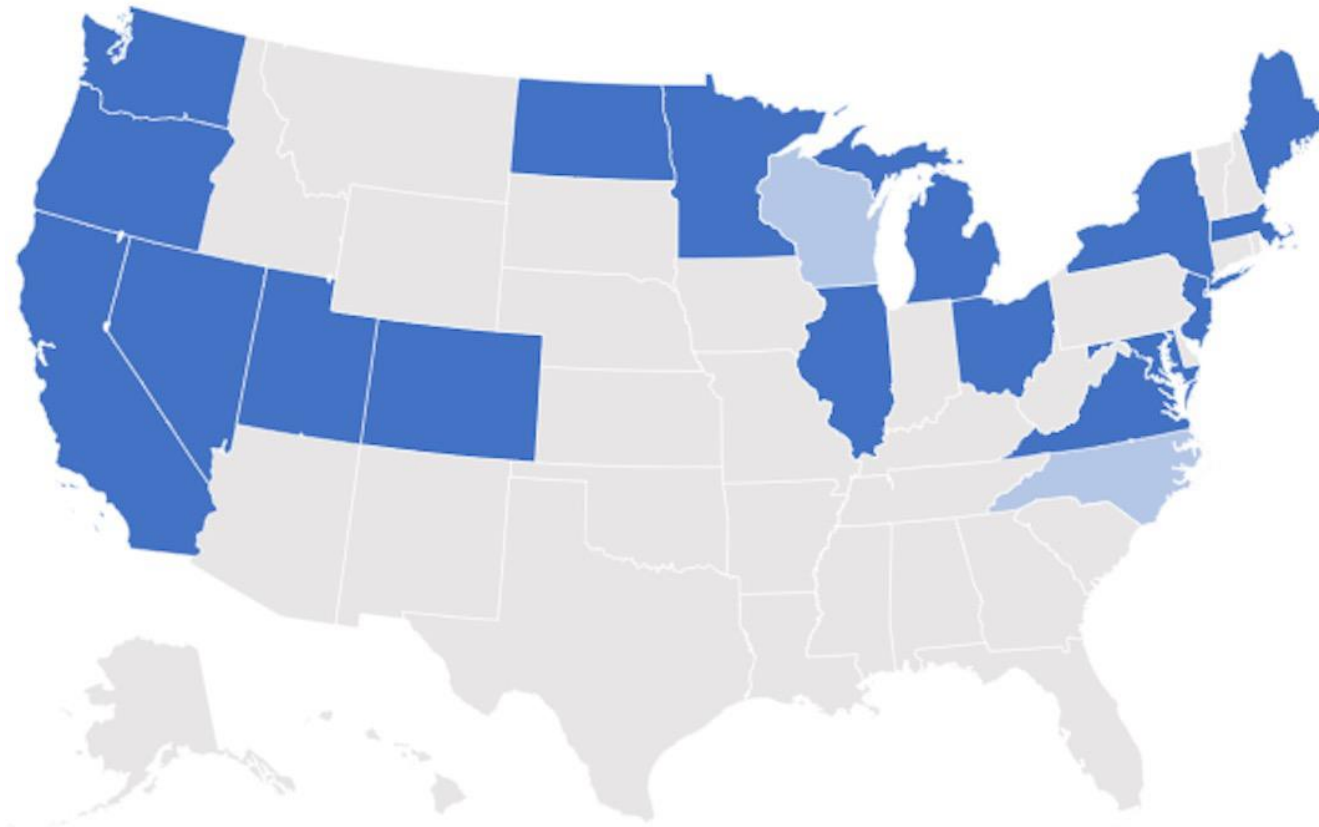
[ONA Plan Contact Form](#)

[Media Inquiries](#)

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# THE OFFICE OF NEW AMERICANS STATE NETWORK



■ Member State

■ Participating State

- The ONA Network is a forum for state policy leaders to drive positive change that supports immigrant and refugee inclusion and economic development
- The Network provides a space for states to share best practices on immigrant integration, learn from issue experts, and engage with federal partners
- Maine is the 19<sup>th</sup> state to join the ONA Network. Other members include Massachusetts, New York, Utah, Michigan, and North Dakota

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# Offices of New Americans

Many states across the country have established – or are considering establishing – an Office of New Americans (ONA) to facilitate the economic and civic inclusion of immigrants and refugees.

- An ONA can serve as a **direct service provider** and offer **technical assistance** to relevant state agencies on how to meet the unique needs of immigrants, refugees, and displaced people
- ONAs **provide advice and direction** to the governor, legislators, and relevant state agencies
- An ONA is responsible for implementing **statewide immigrant inclusion initiatives**

# ONA Goals and Objectives

ONAs differ in structure, placement, duties, and budget. While most have a mission of promoting the economic inclusion of immigrants and refugees, some have one or more of the following additional charges:

**Expanding language  
access**

**Convening government  
agencies and community  
stakeholders**

**Expanding pathways to  
licensure and economic  
participation**

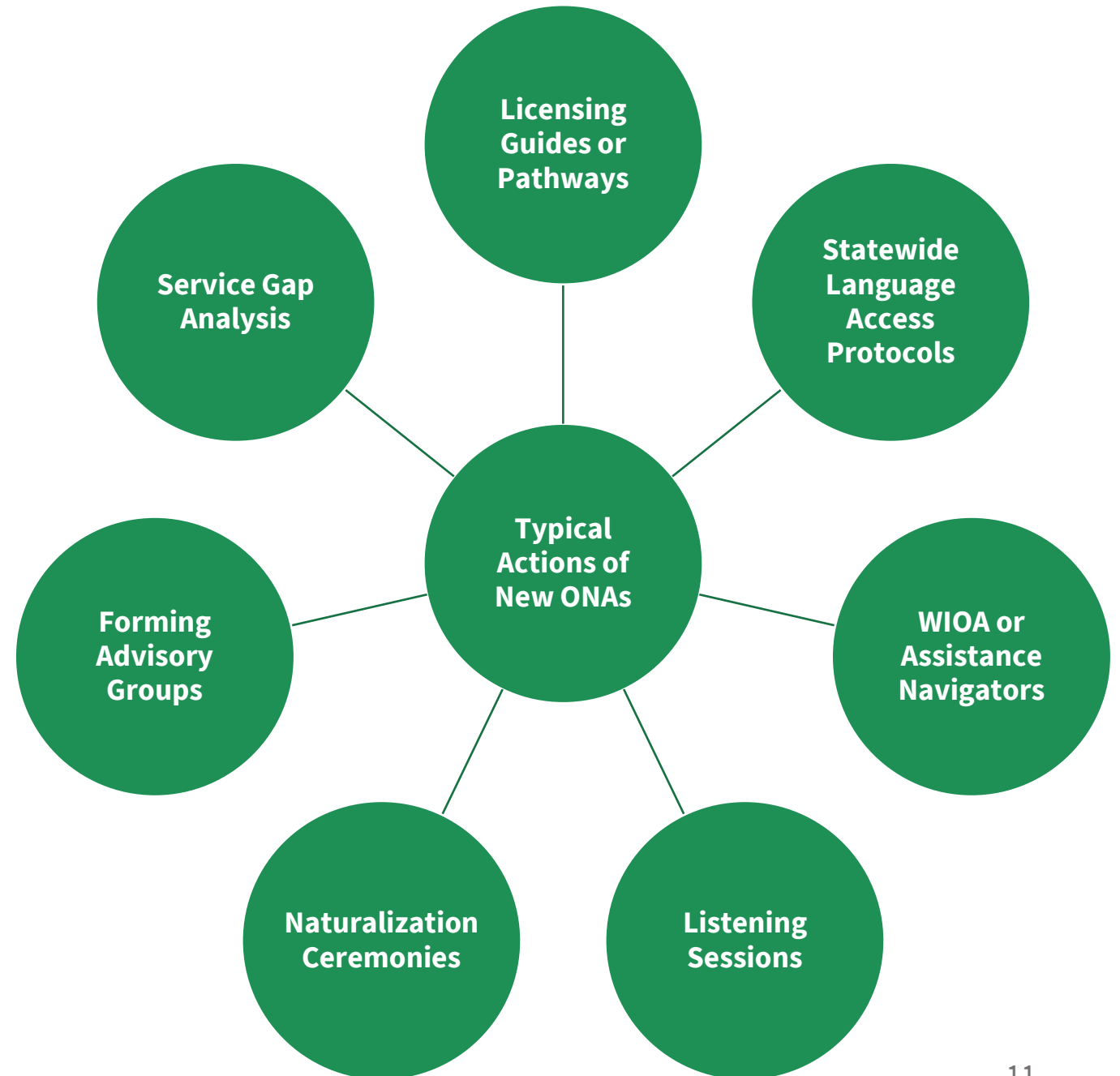
**Increasing access to  
legal representation**

**Managing refugee  
coordination services**

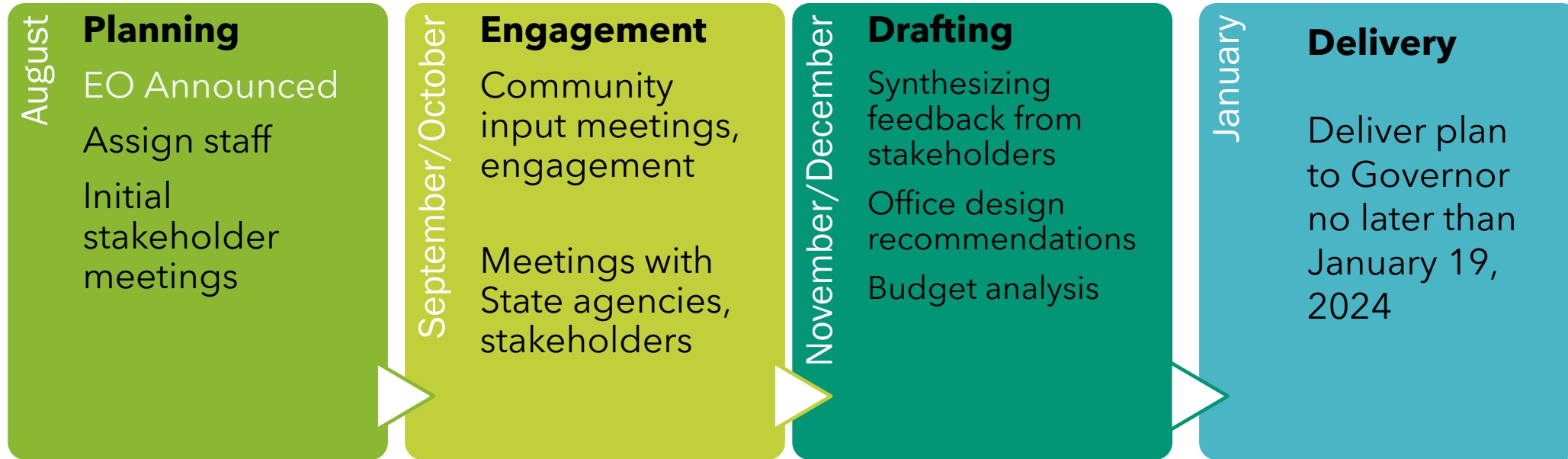
**Coordinating  
naturalization  
ceremonies**

# ONA Priorities

ONAs often initially focus on organization and structure, and then shift to policy reforms for the state and immigrant and refugee communities.



# TIMING OF THE PLANNING, ENGAGEMENT, AND PLAN DELIVERY



## KEY QUESTIONS FOR STAKEHOLDERS

- What should be the **primary role** or roles of the Maine ONA? How do you envision the ONA helping advance the long-term economic and civic integration of immigrants in Maine?
- How do you see **your organization** working with the Maine ONA?
- What do you see as **top priorities** for effectively incorporating immigrants into Maine's workforce and communities?

<https://www.maine.gov/future/ona>

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# CONNECT WITH US

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